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GREGG'S CAVALRY FIGHT AT GETTYSBURG.

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED OCTOBER 15th, 1884,

UPON THE OCCASION OF THE

Dedication of the Monumental Shaft

ERECTED UPON THE SITE OF

THE CAVALRY ENGAGEMENT

ON THE RIGHT FLANK OF THE ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,  
JULY 3d, 1863, DURING THE

BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG.

BY

WILLIAM BROOKE-RAWLE,

*Secretary of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, formerly Captain Third  
Pennsylvania Cavalry, and Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel U. S. A.*

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PHILADELPHIA.

1884.

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WE have gathered together, my comrades, to commemorate the good work done here twenty-one years and more ago. What that work was is briefly told by this monumental shaft of enduring granite which we are now dedicating to the truth of history. Its inscription tells us that

**THIS SHAFT**  
**MARKS THE FIELD OF THE ENGAGEMENT**  
**BETWEEN THE**  
**UNION CAVALRY**  
**COMMANDED BY BRIG.-GEN. D. McM. GREGG**  
**AND THE**  
**CONFEDERATE CAVALRY**  
**COMMANDED BY MAJ.-GEN. J. E. B. STUART**  
**JULY 30, 1863.**

What memories do these simple words recall! As we stand here, looking upon this beautiful landscape, surrounded by these well-remembered hills, and fields, and woods, the recollections of that bright summer day crowd thick and fast upon us. Let us go back together in our thoughts to the eventful time when first we met on this historic field, and sanctified it with the blood then shed, the trials endured, and sacrifices made in defence of the Nation's Cause.

I have told the story of the fight before.\* Here, upon the ground where it occurred, I venture to tell it once

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\* The account here given is substantially the same as that published for the first time in *The Philadelphia Weekly Times* of September 14th, 1878, in the series of "Chapters of Unwritten History in the Annals of the War," under the title of "The Right Flank at Gettysburg," but revised with the aid of additional information and official records.

again. It is a simple and an unvarnished tale, with no words of eulogy of men, or of exultation over the defeat of a gallant foe.

The objects had in view by the Confederate authorities when, after the battle of Chancellorsville, the invasion of the North was projected, in the spring of the year 1863, are well known. To transfer the seat of war, permanently if possible, or at any rate temporarily, to the country north of the Potomac, thus giving to those who remained at home a chance of securing the harvest from the fields of Virginia, and at the same time making probable the recognition of the Confederate cause by the hesitating powers of Europe, was a bold game to play. No time was lost in setting about it. In the early days of June, the Army of Northern Virginia began to show signs of activity. The cavalry of the Army of the Potomac had returned worn out and jaded from Stoneman's raid, but after a short rest was again put in motion, and was kept actively engaged in watching the movements of the Confederate army. On the 9th of June the cavalry battle of Brandy Station was fought, and the intended invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania was discovered through Confederate dispatches captured upon that occasion. Reconnoissances-in-force and scouting in all directions daily followed that brilliant passage-at-arms. The equally well-fought cavalry battles of Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville ensued. Hard work and starvation told heavily upon both men and horses, and when Buford's and Gregg's Divisions, covering the rear of the army, crossed the Potomac at Edwards' Ferry during the afternoon of the 27th of June, their physical condition was far short of what could have been desired. After crossing the river Gregg's Division, consisting of the brigades of Colonel McIntosh

(First), General Kilpatrick (Second), and Colonel Irvin Gregg (Third), started on the march about dusk, and, keeping it up steadily all night long, reached Frederick, Md., early on the morning of the 28th.

During a short halt at that place, General Kilpatrick was ordered to take command of Stahel's Division of Cavalry, which, as the Third Division, was assigned to duty with the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac, and Generals Farnsworth and Custer were appointed to command the two brigades of which it was composed.

In the movements of the Army of the Potomac after crossing into Maryland, the Cavalry Corps, with its three divisions, operated in its front and on its flanks. General Buford with the First Division took the left flank, General Kilpatrick with the Third Division the centre, and General Gregg with the Second Division the right flank. On June 30th, Kilpatrick, having taken the direct and shorter road from Frederick, struck the cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia at Hanover, and intercepted its line of march to join Lee's army. Being thus headed off it was compelled to move over to the right, with Kilpatrick in close pursuit.

In the concentration upon Gettysburg, Gregg, with the First and Third Brigades of his division, left Hanover at day-break on the 2d of July, and about noon, after a tedious and exhausting march, took position on the Hanover (or Bonaughtown) Road near its intersection with the Low Dutch Road, about three and a half miles east of the town—McIntosh's Brigade on the right and Irvin Gregg's on the left.

These two brigades were constituted as follows:—

The First Brigade, commanded by Colonel John B. McIntosh of the Third Pennsylvania Cavalry, consisted of his

own regiment under Lieutenant-Colonel Edward S. Jones, the First New Jersey Cavalry under Major Myron H. Beaumont, and the First Maryland Cavalry under Lieutenant-Colonel James M. Deems, with Captain A. M. Randol's Light Battery E—G, First United States Artillery, of four three-inch rifled guns. It was temporarily deprived of much of its strength by the loss of the First Pennsylvania and First Massachusetts Cavalry regiments which had been detached for special service with the Reserve Artillery and the Sixth Corps respectively. A section of a light battery (H) belonging to the Third Pennsylvania Artillery, under command of Captain William D. Rank, and the Purnell Troop of Maryland Cavalry, under Captain Robert E. Duvall, were also serving temporarily with the First Brigade, having, on the evening of June 28th, while proceeding from Frederick to Baltimore, been cut off by the Confederate cavalry, and, narrowly escaping capture, having fallen in with the brigade. The Third Brigade, commanded by Colonel J. Irvin Gregg of the Sixteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry, consisted of his own regiment under Lieutenant-Colonel John K. Robison, the Fourth Pennsylvania Cavalry under Lieutenant-Colonel William E. Doster, the First Maine Cavalry under Lieutenant-Colonel Charles H. Smith, and the Tenth New York Cavalry under Major M. Henry Avery. The Second Brigade of the division under Colonel Huey had, on July 1st, been sent back from Hanover Junction for the purpose of guarding the rear of the army, and protecting the trains which were to assemble at Westminster.

After crossing the Potomac the column had marched steadily day and night, and, having been for many days without food or forage, the two brigades arrived with wearied men and jaded horses upon the field of Gettysburg. The

long march had been a terrible one. The intense heat had at times been almost unendurable, the dust almost impenetrable. Horses by the score had fallen from exhaustion along the road. Officers and men, begrimed past recognition, could have been seen tramping along on foot, leading their worn-out horses to save their strength, well knowing how much depended upon it. Those whose horses had fallen dead or dying had struggled along, some carrying their saddles and bridles, in hopes of being able to procure fresh mounts, others with nothing but their arms. All had been straining their energies in the one direction where they knew the enemy was to be found.

As has been stated, Gregg's column closed up near the intersection of the Hanover and Low Dutch Roads about noon of July 2d. Two regiments of infantry belonging to the Eleventh Corps were found in the advance, deployed as skirmishers along Brinkerhoff's Ridge, which crosses the Hanover Road nearly at right angles, about two miles or more east of Gettysburg. In their front, there was a considerable force of Confederate infantry. About three o'clock the Union infantry line was relieved by the Tenth New York Cavalry regiment of Irvin Gregg's Brigade, and Rank's two guns were unlimbered and loaded in the middle of the Hanover Road on a hill near the Reeve\* house. The officers and men of the command sought what rest and shelter from the scorching heat they could, while from the hills they watched the conflict between the infantry and artillery of the opposing armies. Some of the men groomed their horses to freshen them up; some allowed

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\* There has been some confusion regarding the appellation of the Reeve and Howard houses respectively. In the former account the house at the junction of the Hanover and Low Dutch Roads was called the Reeve house, and the next house west of it, on the north-  
 erly side of the Hanover Road, the Howard house. One of them, at least, so appeared on  
 the maps of Adams county. The official map of the field recently prepared transposes these  
 names, and, to avoid confusion, the altered designation has been adopted in the text.

theirs to nibble the rich clover, whilst others, thoroughly worn out, tried to obtain a little sleep.

During the afternoon there was some skirmish firing between the opposing lines, and about six o'clock Colonel Irvin Gregg ordered fifty men of the Tenth New York Cavalry to advance dismounted and clear the front. A regiment of Confederate infantry was at once sent out to meet them, and drove back the small party of cavalymen. Suddenly a party of the enemy appeared on the top of Brinkerhoff's Ridge where it crosses the Hanover Road. In a second Rank's men were at their guns, and put two shells into the midst of the party, causing the Confederates to fall back instantly under cover of the ridge. "To horse!" sounded at once, and the Third Pennsylvania, advancing at a trot along the road toward Gettysburg, formed close column of squadrons in an orchard back of the Cress house. The first two squadrons were quickly dismounted to fight on foot, advanced at a run, and in a few minutes were deployed at close intervals as skirmishers on the summit of the eastern spur of Brinkerhoff's Ridge north of the road. The Purnell Troop and two battalions of the First New Jersey, under Major Janeway and Captain Boyd, followed, and deployed dismounted on the left of the road on the prolongation of the same line, with the third battalion under Major Beaumont in reserve. A strong, well-built stone wall ran along the top of the ridge on the right of the road, with a field of tall wheat just ripe for cutting on the other side of the wall. This wall was the key of the position, as each of the contending parties at once perceived, and by the time our men reached it a line of Confederate infantry was seen making for it at full speed. The fire of Rank's guns had delayed the enemy's advance for a sufficient length of time to enable us to get there first,



and give a withering reception with our breech-loading carbines to the infantrymen, who were not more than twenty feet off from the wall when we reached it.

After vainly attempting to drive our men back, the enemy retired to a more sheltered position, along the edge of a piece of woods some two hundred yards distant, where he remained until after dark, the opposing forces and Rank's two guns meanwhile keeping up a brisk firing. Later in the evening the Confederates, taking advantage of the darkness, turned our right unobserved, and dislodged a portion of our line, which, however, was re-established after some trouble. Our adversaries proved to be the Second Virginia Infantry, of General Walker's celebrated "Stonewall Brigade," which latter was supporting it, close at hand, acting as a flanking party of Johnson's Division of Ewell's Corps, in its advance to the attack of Culp's Hill. The threatening position occupied by the cavalrymen, and their vigorous fight, compelled the Confederate brigade to remain on the ground until too late to participate in the assault of Culp's Hill\* which came so near proving successful, and which, had it succeeded, would have rendered the heights south of Gettysburg untenable.

About ten o'clock in the evening the line was withdrawn, and the two brigades moved over to the Baltimore Turnpike, where it crosses White Run, near the position of the Reserve Artillery, and there went into bivouac, in accordance with orders from Cavalry Corps headquarters, to be available for whatever duty they might be called upon to perform on the morrow.

On the morning of July 3d, General Gregg was directed to resume his position on the right of the infantry line,

\*General Johnson's Report, Confederate Reports of Gettysburg Campaign, page 202.

and make a demonstration against the enemy. Upon reaching the ground occupied by him on the previous day on the Hanover Road, he found it in possession of the Second Brigade of the Third Cavalry Division.

This brigade, known as the "Michigan Brigade," of which Brigadier-General George A. Custer had taken command on June 29th, was composed of the First, Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Michigan Cavalry regiments, commanded by Colonels Charles H. Town, Russell A. Alger, George Gray, and William D. Mann, respectively, and Light Battery M, Second United States Artillery, under Lieutenant A. C. M. Pennington, with six three-inch rifled guns. On June 28th, the brigade had been assigned to duty with the Army of the Potomac; on the 30th it had been actively engaged with the Confederate cavalry at Hanover, and again at Hunterstown on July 2d. It was a splendid body of men; its ranks were better filled than those of the other cavalry brigades, and the greater part of it was fresh from pastures green.

General Custer, after his fight with the Confederate cavalry at Hunterstown, had spent the night of July 2d in bivouac with the rest of the Third Division at Two Taverns, a small village on the Baltimore Turnpike, about five miles south-east of Gettysburg. His earlier movements of the following day are best described in his own words:—

"At an early hour on the morning of the 3d," he states in his official report, "I received an order, through a staff officer of the brigadier-general commanding the division, to move my command at once and follow the First Brigade on the road leading from Two Taverns to Gettysburg. Agreeably to the above instructions, my column was formed and moved out on the road designated, when a staff officer of Brigadier-General Gregg, commanding

Second Division, ordered me to take my command and place it in position on the pike leading from York\* to Gettysburg, which position formed the extreme right of our battle on that day. Upon arriving at the point designated, I immediately placed my command in position, facing toward Gettysburg. At the same time I caused reconnoissances to be made on my front, right and rear, but failed to discover any considerable force of the enemy. Everything remained quiet till 10 A. M., when the enemy appeared on my right flank and opened upon me with a battery of six guns. Leaving two guns and a regiment to hold my first position and cover the road leading to Gettysburg, I shifted the remaining portion of my command, forming a new line of battle at right angles to my former line. The enemy had obtained correct range of my new position, and were pouring solid shot and shell into my command with great accuracy. Placing two sections of Battery M, Second (regular) Artillery, in position, I ordered them to silence the enemy's battery, which order, notwithstanding the superiority of the enemy's position, was successfully accomplished in a very short space of time. My line, as it then existed, was shaped like the letter **L**, the shorter branch formed of one section of Battery M, supported by four squadrons of the Sixth Michigan Cavalry, faced toward Gettysburg, covering the Gettysburg Pike; the long branch composed of the remaining two sections of Battery M, Second Artillery, supported by a portion of the Sixth Michigan Cavalry on the left, and the First Michigan Cavalry on the right, with the Seventh Michigan Cavalry still further to the right and in advance, was held in readiness to repel any

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\* General Custer erroneously calls the Hanover Road the York Turnpike, and the Low Dutch Road the Oxford Road.

attack the enemy might make coming on the *Oxford* Road. The Fifth Michigan Cavalry was dismounted and ordered to take position in front of my centre and left. The First Michigan Cavalry was held in column of squadrons to observe the movements of the enemy. I ordered fifty men to be sent one mile and a half on the *Oxford* Road, while a detachment of equal size was sent one mile and a half on the road leading from Gettysburg to *York*, both detachments being under the command of the gallant Major Webber, who from time to time kept me so well informed of the movements of the enemy that I was enabled to make my dispositions with complete success."

General Gregg placed his two brigades to the left of General Custer's line, taking position between the Baltimore Turnpike and the Hanover Road. The Sixteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry, of Irvin Gregg's Brigade, was dismounted and, deploying as skirmishers, moved through the woods in the direction of Gettysburg. It had not proceeded far when a strong picket force of Confederate infantry was found. After driving in the outposts for a short distance, the cavalymen succeeded, in the face of a strong resistance, in establishing their line connecting with the infantry on the left near Wolf's Hill, and extending to the right as far as the Hanover Road. This had scarce been done, when, about noon, a dispatch from General Howard, the commander of the Eleventh Corps, to General Meade, was placed in General Gregg's hands, notifying him that a large body of the enemy's cavalry had been seen from Cemetery Hill moving toward the right of our line. At the same time an order was received from General Pleasanton, who commanded the Cavalry Corps, directing Custer's Brigade to join its division (Kilpatrick's) on the extreme left of the army. Accordingly, McIntosh's Brigade

was ordered to relieve Custer's, and to occupy his position covering the intersection of the Hanover and Low Dutch Roads.

While these movements were going on upon our part, the Confederate cavalry, under Major-General J. E. B. Stuart, which for some time had been cut off from all communication with the main body of Lee's army, was hastening to join it. It is needless here to follow in detail Stuart's earlier movements, but on July 2d, after having encountered Kilpatrick at Hunterstown, he arrived in the vicinity of Gettysburg, and took position on the York and Harrisburg Roads. He, too, had been marching hard and long. Men and horses had, like ours, suffered severely, but, marching as he had been through an enemy's country, his losses from straggling had, of course, been less than those of the Union cavalry.

During the morning of July 3d, Stuart moved forward to the left and in advance of Ewell's Corps, for the purpose of occupying the elevated ground east of Gettysburg, from which, while protecting the left of Lee's army, he could command a view of the routes leading to the rear of the Army of the Potomac, and could, at the same time, be in position to move out at the proper moment, and there attack it, simultaneously with the grand assault which was to be made upon Cemetery Ridge from the other side by Pickett's Division of Longstreet's Corps, supported by Heth's and Pender's Divisions and Wilcox's Brigade of Hill's Corps. That this was his purpose he tells us almost in so many words.

To appreciate how well adapted was Stuart's position to such a move, one should stand on yonder hill back of Rummel's. The whole country for miles in front of him, clear up to Cemetery Hill and the Round Tops, lay at

his feet. In his rear a cross-country road branches off from the York Turnpike about two and a half miles from Gettysburg, and, crossing over the high ground mentioned by Stuart, runs in a south-easterly direction toward the Low Dutch Road, which connects the York and Baltimore Turnpikes. This high ground is divided south of the cross-road by the upper valley of Cress' Run, forming two ridges, that west of the run being known as Brinkerhoff's Ridge, and that east of it as Cress' Ridge. A piece of woods crowns the easterly side of the ridge on the southerly side of the cross-road, affording protection and cover to the supports of the battery which was subsequently placed there. Screened by this and another piece of woods on the opposite side of the cross-road is a large open space on the Stallsmith farm, where the Confederate leader was enabled to mass and manœuvre his command unobserved by his opponents.

The position occupied by the Union cavalry had none of the advantages claimed by Stuart for his own. As he himself states in his official report, the whole country for miles lay at his feet. On the other hand, the ground occupied by his opponents was less commanding, and more exposed to his view. The Low Dutch Road crosses the Hanover Road nearly at right angles, about three and a half miles south-east of Gettysburg, at the Howard house, and, continuing on about two miles farther in a south-westerly direction, strikes the Baltimore Turnpike about one mile and three-fourths south-east of Rock Creek and the rear of centre of our main line of battle. Another cross-country road, from half a mile to a mile nearer Gettysburg, runs nearly parallel with the Low Dutch Road from the Hanover Road at the Reeve house along the valley of Cress' Run, and strikes the Baltimore Turnpike by the

bridge over White Run about a mile south-east of the bridge over Rock Creek, close to which, by Powers' Hill, the Reserve Artillery and the ammunition trains were stationed. This, being the shorter and more direct road, was used by our troops in operating between the Baltimore Turnpike and the Hanover Road. By these roads the rear of our main line of battle was directly accessible. About three-fourths of a mile north-east from the intersection of the Low Dutch and Hanover Roads the cross-country road first above mentioned branches off to the north-west toward the York Turnpike and the left centre of Stuart's position. This piece of woods near which we stand, and which since the battle has been somewhat reduced in extent, covered the intersection of the Low Dutch Road and the cross-road on the side toward the enemy's position, extending about equidistant on each road from near a lane leading down to John Rummel's house and farm-buildings on the north, to the Lott house on the south, a total distance of a half-mile or more. One side of this piece of woods faced the north-west and the enemy's position. Between the ridge on which the Howard house stands, and along which the Low Dutch Road runs, and that part of Cress' Ridge occupied by the right of Stuart's line, but close under the latter, is a small creek known as Little's Run, starting from the spring-house at Rummel's. The Rummel farm-buildings eventually became the key-point of the field, which lies about three miles east of Gettysburg.

The force under Gregg numbered about five thousand men, though not more than three thousand were actually engaged in the fight about to be described. It consisted of the three regiments of McIntosh's Brigade, Irvin Gregg's Brigade, and Custer's Brigade, which, as will appear, re-

mained on the field. On the other hand Stuart had under his command General Wade Hampton's Brigade, consisting of the First North Carolina and the First and Second South Carolina Cavalry regiments, and Cobb's Georgia, the Jeff Davis, and Phillips' Georgia Legions; General Fitzhugh Lee's Brigade, consisting of the First, Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Virginia Cavalry regiments, and the First Maryland Battalion; and General W. H. F. Lee's Brigade, under Colonel John R. Chambliss, consisting of the Second North Carolina and the Ninth, Tenth, Thirteenth, and Fifteenth Virginia Cavalry regiments. To this force was added, for the proposed movements of the day, Jenkins' Brigade of cavalry, under Colonel Milton J. Ferguson, armed as mounted infantry with Enfield muskets, though short of ammunition, and consisting of the Fourteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Virginia Cavalry regiments, and the Thirty-fourth and Thirty-sixth Virginia Battalions. The artillery with Stuart consisted of McGregor's Virginia, Breathed's Maryland, and Griffin's Second Maryland batteries. This entire force has been estimated by reliable Confederate authority at between six thousand and seven thousand men.\*

When McIntosh, shortly before one o'clock in the afternoon, came with his brigade upon the ground occupied by Custer for the purpose of relieving him, he made the necessary inquiries as to his picket line, and the position and force of the enemy. Everything was quiet at the time. Custer reported, however, that the enemy was all around, and that an attack might be expected at any moment. The First New Jersey was at once ordered out, mounted,

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\* The information as to the organization of the four Confederate brigades has been obtained from records in possession of the War Department. As to the Confederate artillery the information has been obtained through the kindness of Major H. B. McClellan, formerly Assistant Adjutant-General upon the staff of General Stuart.



to relieve Custer's pickets, taking position in the piece of woods on the Low Dutch Road, facing to the north-west, and the Third Pennsylvania and First Maryland were drawn up in columns of squadrons in a clover field west of the Lott house, awaiting developments. While in this position, and a few minutes after one o'clock, the tremendous artillery firing which preceded Pickett's attack began. Not being within range, however, the officers and men of the brigade, while allowing their horses to graze, looked with astonishment upon the magnificent spectacle.

As soon as the Michigan Brigade had moved off for the purpose of joining Kilpatrick near Round Top, McIntosh, who had looked well over the ground, determined to ascertain what force was in his front without waiting to be attacked. Accordingly, about two o'clock, he ordered Major Beaumont to move the First New Jersey forward toward the wooded crest about five-eighths of a mile in front of him and a short distance beyond Rummel's, expecting there to find the enemy. This movement was a signal for the deployment of a skirmish line from Rummel's barn, where a strong picket force of the enemy had been concealed, and which at once occupied a line of fences a short distance in front. The First New Jersey was dismounted and took position behind a fence running parallel with that occupied by the enemy, the right of the line under Major Janeway and the left under Captain Boyd, and immediately became hotly engaged. Two squadrons of the Third Pennsylvania, under Captains Rogers and Treichel, and the Purnell Troop, were deployed dismounted to the left in the open fields, and the two other squadrons of the Third Pennsylvania,\* under

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\* In the exceptionally hard work of the campaign, this regiment had become so much reduced in numbers that in order to increase its efficiency it had been temporarily consolidated into four squadrons instead of six.

Captains Miller and Walsh, deployed mounted to the extreme right of the whole line, in the woods covering the cross-road above mentioned running toward the enemy's position, Miller on the left of the road and Walsh on the right. To meet this movement the Confederate skirmish line was strongly reinforced by dismounted men, and a battery was placed in position in front of the wooded crest back of the Rummel house.

The Confederate battery now opened fire, and Pennington, whose battery was still in position on the Hanover Road near the Spangler house, replied with promptness. McIntosh at once sent back for Randol and his guns, at the same time reporting to General Gregg that he was engaged with a greatly superior force, and requesting that Irvin Gregg's Brigade be sent up at a trot to support him. That brigade was yet some distance off, and Gregg, meeting Custer on the march in the opposite direction, ordered him to return and reinforce McIntosh, and to remain on the ground until the Third Brigade could be brought up. Custer, ever ready for a fight, was not loth to do so. Heading his column about, he moved up at once to McIntosh's support, while General Gregg came upon the field and took command of the forces.

The enemy having filled the large barn at Rummel's with sharp-shooters, who, while picking off our men, were completely protected from our fire, Captain Randol, upon coming on the ground, placed in position, on the edge of an orchard back of the Howard house, a section of his battery under Lieutenant Chester, and opened upon the barn. Shell after shell from Pennington's battery and Chester's section struck the building, soon compelling the enemy to abandon it, and, as he did so, the centre of our line advanced and occupied the enemy's line of fences near the farm-buildings.

Having thus pierced his line, a force was sent out to take the enemy in flank, which succeeded in driving back the portions of Jenkins' Brigade in front of our left centre. This movement caused the left of the enemy's line, held by the dismounted skirmishers of Hampton's and Fitz Lee's Brigades, to give way also. The centre and left of our line were thus advanced, and four squadrons of the Sixth Michigan went into position dismounted along Little's Run, on the left of the Purnell Troop, extending still further to the left, so as to cover the Hanover Road, the remainder of the regiment supporting them. Randol's second section, under Lieutenant Kinney, an officer of General Tyler's staff who had volunteered to serve with the battery, having come up, he placed it to the left and rear of Chester's section. By the accuracy of their fire and superior range, the two batteries soon silenced the enemy's guns on the crest back of Rummel's, as also some others in position more to our left on Brinkerhoff's Ridge.

Meanwhile a column of Confederate cavalry began to move out of the woods to make a charge upon the right of our line, but it was at once driven back, with some loss, by the effective fire of our artillery.

As the ammunition of the First New Jersey and Third Pennsylvania was becoming exhausted, the Fifth Michigan, armed with Spencer repeating carbines, was ordered to relieve them, and moved up to the front, dismounted, along the line of fences which intersected the field lengthwise. No sooner had it reached the line than a dismounted regiment from W. H. F. Lee's Brigade advanced to the support of the enemy's skirmishers, and made a terrific onslaught upon the position. The Fifth Michigan, though short of ammunition from the beginning of the fight, and the troops it had come up to relieve, held the ground stubbornly.

When the fire had slackened, the First New Jersey and the two Third Pennsylvania squadrons, which had been ordered to retire when the Fifth Michigan came up, endeavored to withdraw. The enemy, believing it a signal of retreat, advanced, first on the right and then on the left. The Jerseymen and Pennsylvanians came back upon the line and assisted in the repulse of the attack, and again and again was this repeated.

The right of the First New Jersey and of the Fifth Michigan remained at their part of the line until the last cartridge was used, and the last pistol emptied, and then fell back, but not until they had suffered heavily, among the killed being the gallant Major Ferry of the Fifth Michigan. This movement was taken advantage of by the enemy, and the First Virginia, of Fitz Lee's Brigade, was ordered to charge upon our right centre. As it was seen to start, McIntosh rode over quickly to the Lott house, where he had left the First Maryland prepared for such an emergency. Gregg, however, upon coming on the field, had moved the regiment over to the right to cover the Low Dutch and Hanover Roads for the purpose of guarding more effectually that important quarter. The Seventh Michigan, which was to take its place, was just then coming upon the field from the direction of the Reeve house in column of fours. Custer, who was near, also saw the emergency, ordered close column of squadrons to be formed at the gallop, and advanced with it to meet the attack.

As the First New Jersey retired, the right of the Fifth Michigan swung back and took a position behind the fence which ran nearly parallel with the line of the charging column.

The Seventh Michigan advanced boldly to meet the First Virginia, but, on coming up to a stone and rail

fence, instead of pushing across it, began firing with their carbines. The First Virginia came on, in spite of the heavy fire, until it reached the fence from the other side. Both regiments then fought face to face across the fence with their carbines and revolvers, while a scorching fire was centred upon the First Virginia from either flank. The enemy's reinforcements at last came up, and assisted the First Virginia to pass the fence, whereupon the Seventh Michigan gave way, the enemy following in close pursuit.

The First Virginia, becoming strung out by this movement, was exposed to a terrific fire from the two batteries in front and the skirmish lines on the flanks, while some of the Fifth Michigan, who had succeeded in mounting, advanced under Major Trowbridge to assist the Seventh. It was more than even the gallant First Virginia could stand, and it was compelled to fall back on its supports, which were fast advancing to its assistance.\*

Just then there appeared in the distance, emerging from behind the screen of woods on the cross-road by the Stall-smith farm, a large mass of cavalry—the brigades of Hampton and Fitz Lee.† Every one saw at once that

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\* The statement that this preliminary charge was made by the First Virginia Cavalry of Fitz Lee's Brigade is based upon the authority of General Stuart's report, confirmed by a letter of General Fitzhugh Lee. General Stuart further states that the First North Carolina and Jeff Davis Legion were sent to the support of the First Virginia, and that gradually the hand-to-hand fighting involved the greater portion of his command. On the other hand the Rev. George W. Beale, then a lieutenant in the Ninth Virginia Cavalry, in a letter written a few days after the battle, and published in vol. XI, Southern Historical Society Papers, p. 320, stated that the charge was made by the Ninth and Thirteenth Virginia of W. H. F. Lee's Brigade, commanded by Chambliss. General Wade Hampton states in his report that, seeing that a portion of Chambliss' command was being driven back by a large force, he ordered the First North Carolina and Jeff Davis Legion to its support, which drove our people back, but encountering our reserves in heavy force his and Fitz Lee's Brigades charged, and in the hand-to-hand fight which then occurred he was wounded.

No official reports of the battle made by General Fitzhugh Lee or Colonel Chambliss are to be found among the Confederate official records in the War Department.

† According to the writer's diary this was about three o'clock.

unless this, the grandest attack of all, were checked, the fate of the day would be decided against the Army of the Potomac. They were Stuart's last reserves, and his last resource. If the Baltimore Pike was to be reached, and havoc created in our rear, the important moment had arrived, as Pickett was even then moving up to the assault of Cemetery Ridge.

In close columns of squadrons, advancing as if in review, with sabres drawn and glistening like silver in the bright sunlight—the spectacle called forth a murmur of admiration. It was, indeed, a memorable one. Chester, whose guns were nearest, opened fire at once, with a range of three-fourths of a mile. Pennington and Kinney soon did the same. Canister and shell were poured into the steadily approaching columns as fast as the guns could fire. The dismounted men fell back to the right and left, and such as could got to their horses. The mounted skirmishers rallied and fell into line. Then Gregg rode over to the First Michigan, which, as it had come upon the field a short time before, had formed close column of squadrons supporting the batteries, and gave the word to charge. As Town ordered sabres to be drawn and the column to advance, Custer dashed up with similar orders, and placed himself at its head. The two columns drew nearer and nearer, the Confederates outnumbering their opponents three or four to one. The gait increased—first the trot, then the gallop. Hampton's battle-flag floated in the van of his brigade. The orders of the Confederate officers could be heard, "Keep to your sabres, men, keep to your sabres!" for the lessons they had learned at Brandy Station and at Aldie had been severe. There the cry had been, "Put up your sabres! Draw your pistols and fight like gentlemen!" But the sabre was never a

favorite weapon with the Confederate cavalry, and now, in spite of the lessons of the past, the warnings of the present were not heeded by all.

As the charge was ordered the speed increased, every horse on the jump, every man yelling like a demon. The columns of the Confederates blended, but the perfect alignment was maintained. Chester put charge after charge of double canister into their midst, his men bringing it up to the guns by the armful. The execution was fearful, but the long rents closed up at once. As the opposing columns drew nearer and nearer, each with perfect alignment, every man gathered his horse well under him, and gripped his weapon the tighter. Though ordered to retire his guns, toward which the head of the assaulting column was directed, Chester kept on firing until the enemy was within fifty yards, and the head of the First Michigan had come into the line of his fire. Staggered by the fearful execution of the two batteries, the men in the front of the Confederate column drew in their horses and wavered. Some turned, and the column fanned out to the right and left, but those behind came pressing on. Custer, seeing the men in the front ranks of the enemy hesitate, waved his sabre and shouted, "Come on, you wolverines!" and with a fearful yell the First Michigan rushed on, Custer four lengths ahead.

McIntosh, as he saw the Confederate column advancing, sent his Adjutant-General, Captain Walter S. Newhall, with orders to Rogers and Treichel to rally their men for a charge on the flank as it passed. But sixteen men could get their horses, and with five officers they made for the battle-flag. Newhall, sharing the excitement of the moment, rushed in, by the side of Rogers and Treichel, at the head of the little band. Miller, whose squadron

of the Third Pennsylvania was already mounted, fired a volley from the woods on the right as the Confederate column passed parallel with his line, and then, with sabres drawn, charged into the overwhelming masses of the enemy.

The small detachment of the Third Pennsylvania under Rogers and Treichel struck the enemy first, all making for the color-guard. Newhall was about seizing the flag when a sabre cut was directed at his head, and he was compelled to parry it. At the same moment the color-bearer lowered his spear and struck Newhall full in the face, knocking him senseless to the ground. Nearly every officer and man in the little band was killed or wounded. Almost at the same moment, Miller, with his squadron of the Third Pennsylvania, struck the left flank about two-thirds of the way down the column. Going through and through, he cut off the rear portion and drove it back past Rummel's up to the Confederate battery, and nothing but the heavy losses which he had suffered, and the scattering of his men, prevented his going farther and taking it, wounded though he was.

Meanwhile the heads of the two columns had met—the one led by Hampton and Fitz Lee, and the other by Custer—and were fighting hand to hand. McIntosh, with his staff and orderlies, and such scattered men from the Michigan and other regiments as he could get together, charged in with their sabres. For minutes, which seemed like hours, amid the clashing of the sabres, the rattle of the small arms, the frenzied imprecations, the demands to surrender, the undaunted replies and the appeals for mercy, the Confederate column stood its ground. Captain Thomas of the staff, seeing that a little more was needed to turn the tide, cut his way over to the woods on the



right, where he knew he could find Hart, who had remounted his squadron of the First New Jersey. In the *mélée*, near the colors, was an officer of high rank, and the two headed the squadron for that part of the fight. They came within reach of him with their sabres, and then it was that Wade Hampton was wounded.

By this time the edges of the Confederate column had begun to wear away, and the outside men to draw back. As Hart's squadron and the other small parties charged in from all sides, the enemy turned. Then there was a pell-mell rush, our men following in close pursuit. Many prisoners were captured, and many of our men, through their impetuosity, were carried away by the overpowering current of the retreat.

The pursuit was kept up past Rummel's, and the enemy was driven back into the woods beyond. The line of fences, and the farm-buildings, the key-point of the field, which in the beginning of the fight had been in the possession of the enemy, remained in ours until the end. The enemy, however, established and maintained a skirmish line on his side of the farm-buildings, and for a time kept up a brisk firing, but all serious fighting for the day was over, for Pickett's simultaneous attack upon Cemetery Ridge had also been repulsed, and the victory along our line was complete. Skirmishing and some desultory artillery firing were kept up at intervals by both forces until after nightfall, these disturbances being for the most part caused by the enemy's endeavors to recover his killed and wounded, who were lying thickly strewn over the field in our possession. At dark Stuart withdrew to the York Turnpike, preparatory to covering the retreat of Lee's army toward the Potomac. In the evening Custer's Brigade was ordered to join its division. Gregg remained all night in possession of the field of th

hand-to-hand contest, and in the morning his Third Brigade started in pursuit of the retreating enemy.\*

The brunt of the fighting in Gregg's Division was borne by the Third Pennsylvania and First New Jersey Cavalry regiments, for, by the time the Third Brigade had come up, the Michigan Brigade had gotten so deeply into the fight that it could not be withdrawn. The Third Brigade, together with the First Massachusetts Cavalry, which latter, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Greely S. Curtis, had come upon the field during the fight, and Rank's section of artillery, had consequently been held in reserve, close at hand, drawn up in column of regiments on the south side of the Hanover Road west of the Low Dutch Road, near the Spangler house. The Sixteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry remained all day, and until late into the night, upon the skirmish line established in the morning, interchanging at frequent intervals a brisk fire with the enemy's infantry, especially about the Deodorf farm-buildings which were filled with his sharpshooters, and at one time repulsing a vigorous attack upon the line, thus efficiently maintaining the connection between our infantry and cavalry, and preventing a flank attack from that quarter of the field. The moral effect of the presence of these troops in full view of the field of the fighting, and easily observed

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\* The Comte de Paris states (Vol. iii., Am. Ed., Hist. of Civil War in America, page 673, &c.) that Stuart's object was to move his command west of Cress' Ridge, so as to turn the left of the Union cavalry unobserved, and thus separating it from the rest of the army, to strike the Baltimore Turnpike without waiting for the issue of the great struggle, in order to create a panic in the rear of our main line of battle, the effect of which would be decisive upon the battlefield, but that his presence having been disclosed by the debouching of Hampton's and Fitz Lee's Brigades into the open fields beyond Rummel's, and McIntosh having forced the fighting, he (Stuart) was compelled to leave those brigades to detain the Union cavalry north of the Hanover Road while he continued his movement with Jenkins' Brigade and that commanded by Chambliss, which also were soon forced to join in the fight, the consequence being that he was prevented from accomplishing his object.

from the enemy's position, went far toward securing the successful results of the day.

The losses of the Confederate cavalry were undoubtedly heavy, but were never ascertained. General Gregg reported his losses to be, one officer and thirty-three enlisted men killed, seventeen officers and one hundred and forty enlisted men wounded, and one officer and one hundred and three enlisted men missing—total, two hundred and ninety-five. Custer in his official report stated his losses to be, nine officers and sixty-nine enlisted men killed, twenty-five officers and two hundred and seven enlisted men wounded, and seven officers and two hundred and twenty-five enlisted men missing—total, five hundred and forty-two.\*

It has been said that Gregg's fight at Gettysburg was one of the finest cavalry fights of the war. To borrow the language of Custer in his report of it: "I challenge the annals of warfare to produce a more brilliant or successful charge of cavalry than the one just recounted."

Stuart, according to his custom, claimed in his official report that the Union cavalry was driven from the field of the engagement, thus insinuating that he was the victor of the fight, and other Confederates are now doing likewise. That we, on the contrary, remained masters of the field is maintained by Generals Pleasonton, Gregg and Custer, and Colonels Town and Alger, in their official reports. In denying Stuart's unwarranted insinuation you, my comrades, will also bear me out.\*

\* As has been stated in the text, the Union cavalry, at one time, when the two Confederate brigades almost reached our guns, *was* nearly driven from the field of the main fight, but Stuart omits to report correctly what followed our counter-charge, and his words leave an incorrect impression.

Since the Union and Confederate commanders each claimed to have driven the other from the field, the Comte de Paris endeavors to settle the question by stating that the ground was abandoned by both parties.

\* See "Additional Note," at end.

We cavalrymen have always held that we saved the day at the most critical moment of the battle of Gettysburg—the greatest battle and the turning point of the War of the Rebellion. I know that it has not been the custom among historians to give us credit for having done so, nor, except very recently, to give us credit for having done anything. So fierce was the main engagement, of which the infantry bore the brunt, that the fighting on the part of the cavalry passed almost unnoticed; yet this was the only battle of the War in which the three arms of the service fought in combination and at the same time, each within supporting distance and within sight of the other, and each in its proper sphere. The turmoil incident to an active campaign allowed us no opportunity to write up our achievements, and no news-correspondents were allowed to sojourn with us, to do it for us. But now that the official records of the campaign, both Union and Confederate, have been brought together, and, for the first time, been made accessible, and the official map of this field has been prepared,\* the Great Historian of the War, as yet unknown, and perhaps unborn, will have at hand materials which have been denied to others. He will see the importance of the fight which I have attempted to describe, and will give it the credit due to it. Had Stuart succeeded in his well-laid plan, and, with his large force of cavalry, struck the Army of the Potomac in the rear of its line of battle, simultaneously with Pickett's magnificent and furious assault in its front, when our infantry had all it could do to hold on to the line of Cemetery Ridge, and but little more was needed to make the assault a success,—the merest tyro in the art of war can readily tell what the result would have been. Fortu-

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\* In pursuance of the act of Congress of June 9th, 1880.

nately for us; fortunately for the Army of the Potomac; fortunately for our Country and the cause of human liberty, he failed. Thank God that he did fail, and that, with His Divine Assistance, the good fight fought here brought victory to our arms!

Comrades, your work here is now done—well done. This shaft, beautiful in its simplicity, will stand when we are gone, to point out in silence, from far and near, and for all time let us hope, the spot on which you fought so well.

Before we part, never perhaps to meet again, let us not forget to pause one moment, and in our inmost thoughts pay a reverent tribute to the memory of those brave men, our companions-in-arms, who here poured forth the full measure of their lives' devotion for the Cause they loved. And what shall I say to those who yet survive? That you, my comrades, bore each your share in that good fight will always be to you a pleasing memory, and when your children and your children's children hear and read of what you did on this historic field, it will ever be to them a source of honorable pride that you fought with Gregg on the Right Flank at Gettysburg.

“Oh! glorious field of Gettysburg!  
High in the rolls of fame,  
With Waterloo and Marathon  
Shall men inscribe thy name!”



#### ADDITIONAL NOTE.

General Custer, in his official report of the services of his brigade in the battle, inadvertently included his losses in the whole of the Gettysburg campaign. Though suspected at the time the text was written, this was not definitely ascertained to be a fact until the official records in the War Department, subsequently collated, proved it to be so. The writer was careful in the text to assume no responsibility in quoting General Custer's estimate of losses. General Gregg's estimate included as well the losses in McIntosh's and Irvin Gregg's brigades as those in Custer's brigade. Owing to the much fuller complement of the latter and the numbers engaged the proportion of its losses were much larger than those of the other brigades. According to the final corrected statement prepared by the War Department its records show the losses to have been as follows: July 24, in McIntosh's and Irvin Gregg's brigades, four enlisted men killed, twelve enlisted men wounded, and one officer and three enlisted men captured and missing—total, twenty; July 31, in McIntosh's, Irvin Gregg's, and Custer's brigades, one officer and twenty-nine enlisted men killed, eighteen officers and one hundred and thirty-one enlisted men wounded, and sixty-five enlisted men captured and missing—total, two hundred and fifty-four; total on right flank, July 24 and 31, three hundred and nine. This estimate does not include the losses of the batteries.

In consequence of the movements of the cavalry during and following the battle, and the lapse of time before the rolls were prepared, some of the killed were included in the report of "captured and missing."





Henry Flanders Esq<sup>r</sup>

With the Writer's Compliments

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Gregg's Cavalry Fight

Gettysburg.

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16 May '13







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